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ABSTRACT

An analysis of four foundational issues in the study of moral development is provided. The four issues involve: (1) the definition of morality; (2) individual or cultural moral variation; (3) moral ontogeny; and (4) moral epistemology. The first section of the paper describes each issue. The second section is based on the argument that the four issues can be combined in six paired combinations, four of which often result in confusions or conflations in the theoretical and empirical research literature. Each of the four problematic combinations is discussed. It is suggested that while the content of moral-developmental controversies can vary widely, the sources of the controversies are often bounded by one or more of the four issues under consideration. Examples are offered of ways in which moral theory and research have confused evidence that pertains to two or more of the issues. While these issues are analytically distinct, they often can and should be brought together in moral theory and research. Approximately 75 references are cited. (RH)

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The Components of Moral-Developmental Controversy: Issues and Methods

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Presumably uncontroversial is the proposition that the moral-developmental literature abounds in controversy. From some anthropological accounts, for instance, we learn that devout Hindus believe that it is immoral for a widow to eat fish two or three times a week, or for a menstruating women to cook her family food (Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987). Other accounts document that members of the Yanomamo tribe of Brazil at times practice infanticide, and that the women are "occasionally beaten, shot with barbed arrows, chopped with machetes or axes, and burned with firebrands" (Hatch, 1983, p. 91). Some theorists use such illustrative accounts of moral diversity to argue against the proposition, supported by others, that one culture can morally judge another culture. Some also use such accounts to argue against the proposition, again supported by others, that on important dimensions the moral life is similar across cultures.

Many such controversies in the literature (spanning the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and education) reflect persistent and pervasive differences in theoretical perspectives. These differences can neither be easily dismissed nor reconciled, and are the stuff that underlie serious debate and questioning of all involved. However, some of these controversies become more complicated if not muddled than they need be because they confuse what I will refer to as distinct foundational issues in the study of moral development. This paper takes up an analysis of four such issues. The first issue entails the definition of morality, the second entails individual or cultural moral variation, the third entails moral ontogeny, and the fourth entails moral epistemology. In the first section of this paper, I will describe each issue more fully. In the second section, I will (a) suggest that while the content of moral-developmental controversies can vary widely, the sources of the controversies are often bounded by one or more of these issues; (b) provide examples of how moral theory and research have sometimes confused or confounded evidence that pertains to two or more of these issues; and (c) suggest that while these issues are analytically distinct, they often can and should be brought together in moral theory and research.

Four Foundational Issues

Moral Definition.

One issue in the study of moral development is how the term "moral" is defined. Traditionally, in philosophy, three broad approaches have been taken: consequentialist, deontological, and virtue-based. Briefly stated, consequentialist theories maintain that a moral agent must always act so as to produce the best available outcomes overall (see Scheffler, 1982). Utilitarianism, dating from John Stuart Mills, and more recently defended by Smart (Smart & Williams, 1973), is the most common form of consequentialism. Utilitarianism proposes that everyone should act so as to bring about the greatest amount of utility (e.g., happiness) for the greatest number of people. In contrast, deontological theories maintain that there are some actions that a moral agent is forbidden to do, or, in turn, must do, regardless of general consequences or utility. Moral theories stemming from Kant's (1785/1984) work in ethics to current work by Rawls (1971), Gewirth (1978), and Dworkin (1978) are largely of this type. For example, Kant's maxim that a moral agent should never treat another human being merely as a means but always as an end develops the idea of a rationally-derived respect for person.

Both consequentialist and deontological theories are centrally concerned with answering the fundamental question, "What ought I to do?" In turn, virtue-based theories are centrally concerned with answering the fundamental question, "What sort of person ought I to be?", where the focus is on long-term character traits and personality (see Louden, 1984). This tradition dates back to Aristotle's delineation in Nichomachean Ethics of the ethical virtues (e.g., courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice), and developed in current work by, for instance, MacIntyre (1984) and Foot (1978).

Moral Ontogeny.

A second issue in the study of moral development is in explaining moral ontogeny: the developmental process. Drawing on systematic characterizations by Turiel (1983), Piaget (1966), and Langer (1969), four general types of explanations can be provided for moral development. The first entails an endogenous explanation, where it is proposed that development largely occurs through internal mechanisms. Included are innatist and maturational theories (Rousseau, 1762/1964; Neill, 1960/1977), and sociobiological theories (Dawkins, 1976; Trivers 1971; Wilson, 1975). The second entails exogenous theories, where it is proposed that development largely occurs through external

mechanisms. Included here are behavioristic theories that focus on stimulus-response mechanisms and operant conditioning (Watson, 1924/1970; Skinner, 1974) and social-learning theories that focus on modeling and imitation (Bandura, 1977; Rushton, 1982). The third entails an interactional theory of endogenous and exogenous forces. Prototypic of this type is Freudian theory (1923/1960), where it is proposed that the child's strong instinctual desires come into conflict with strong environmental constraints; through attempting to reconcile such conflicts the child proceeds through the oral, anal, and genital stages, resulting in the resolution of the Oedipal complex and the formation of the superego: the repository of the child's moral conscience. Finally, the fourth entails a structural interactional theory. As proposed by Piaget (1932/1969; 1983), and elaborated on by Kohlberg (1971), Turiel (1983), Langer (1969), and others, it is proposed that development occurs through the equilibration of mental structures, which, in turn, is driven by the interaction of the individual with her social environment.

To be noted for each of these types of explanations for moral development, differing views can be taken on the extent, rate, sequence, and invariance of development. Extent refers to how far development proceeds, rate to how fast development proceeds, sequence to the order of the developmental progression, and invariance to whether that order is necessarily sequential.

Moral Variation.

A third issue in the study of moral development is in examining moral variation: empirical differences in the moral practices and beliefs between individuals or groups of individuals (e.g., differences between cultures). Documenting moral variation is part of the stock and trade of anthropologists. A few examples were noted at the start of this paper that involved Hindu beliefs and Yanomamo practices that differ from our own. Empirical research of this type directly informs on the issue of in what ways the moral life is similar or different between cultures, or between individuals within a culture.

Moral Epistemology.

A fourth issue in the study of moral development concerns moral epistemology: the study of the limits and validity of moral knowledge. Often at stake is whether it is possible for a moral statement to be objectively true or false, and for a moral value to be objectively right or wrong, or good or bad. A wide variety of positions have been taken. For instance, some believe

that moral knowledge corresponds to or approaches a correspondence with a moral reality that exists independent of human means of knowing (Spinoza, 1954). Others believe moral knowledge can be objectively grounded by individuals constructing articulated and cohesive moral theories that, as well as possible, build on the common ground and specific circumstances of a society (Dworkin, 1978). Others believe that the only thing that can be said of moral knowledge is that it can be true subjectively for an individual depending on that individual's desires, preferences, and goals (Rorty, 1982; Dewey, 1929/1960; Ayer, 1952; Mackie, 1977). And others believe that any moral knowledge is unattainable, even in a weak sense (the full skeptic's position; see Nagel, 1986, for a characterization).

Proposed Conceptual Distinctions

These above issues — moral definition, variation, ontogeny, and epistemology — can be combined in six distinct paired combinations, four of which often result in confusions or conflations in the theoretical and empirical research literature. In this second section, I take up each of these four combinations.

Distinction between Moral Definition and Moral Ontogeny:

In the opening to Plato's Meno (trans. by W.H.D. Rouse), Menon asks Socrates:

> Can you tell me, Socrates — can virtue be taught? Or if not, does it come by practice? Or does it come neither by practice nor by teaching, but do people get it by nature, or in some other way?

If effect, Menon offers Socrates a choice of developmental mechanisms. Menon asks if virtue develops by exogenous forces (by practice or teaching), by endogenous forces (by nature), or in some other way. In response, Socrates says that he is in no position to answer, as he does not know what virtue is. Thus Socrates, as he is wont to do, embarks on a dialogue that is centrally concerned with the essence of a thing. In other words, Socrates analytically distinguishes the ontogenetic question from the definitional question, and argues that the latter needs as much attention as possible before addressing the former.

This distinction, let alone ranking of priorities, does not always get made in the current literature. For instance, our recent Secretary of Education, William Bennett (see Bennett and Delatree, 1978) has argued vigorously against the cognitive-developmental approach to moral education, as

embodied in the work of Kohlberg (1971). Though it is unclear in his writing, Bennett differs from Kohlberg in two distinct ways. First, Bennett provides a different definition of morality than does Kohlberg:

> In fact, it must be doubted whether what Kohlberg describes is really morality at all. Morality takes place among human beings and not among disembodied bearers of "rights," who are incessantly engaged in squabbling about them. Morality is concerned with doing good, with sacrifice, altruism, love, courage, honor, and compassion, and with fidelity and large-mindedness regarding one's station, commitments, family friends, colleagues, and society in general.

Without worrying about Bennett's misunderstanding of what Kohlberg means by rights, it is clear that while Kohlberg provides largely a deontological definition (of rights and justice), Bennett provides largely a virtue-based definition (including such virtues as sacrifice, altruism, love, courage, honor, compassion, and fidelity).

Second, Bennett accepts largely an exogenous developmental view, whereby moral development occurs through the transmission of those who know (adults) to those who do not (children). Bennett, for instance, ends his essay as follows:

> Finally, according to...Kohlberg, there is no place for stories and lessons, no place for the passing on of knowledge and experience. Children are invited to a world where it is a travesty and an imposition for anyone to tell them the truth. (p. 98)

In contrast to this exogenous view that emphasizes the transmission ("passing on") of moral knowledge, Kohlberg offers a structural-interactional view. This view leads Kohlberg (1980) to pedagogy that involves students in critical thinking about and active participation in moral issues and problems. While this is not the place to discuss the strengths or limitations of views as proposed by Kohlberg or Bennett, it is my point that in such discussions clarity can be achieved by independently addressing issues and assessing arguments that pertain to moral definition and to moral ontogeny.

Other confusions in the literature between moral definition and ontogeny are less transparent, possibly because of the complexity surrounding the particular topic under consideration. This is the circumstance, I believe, that has followed from Gilligan's (1982) proposition that men and women undergo different moral-developmental progressions. According to Gilligan, the progression for men is characterized by principles of justice, and follows

Kohlberg's stages of moral development. The end point of Kohlberg's theory, Gilligan claims, is one of autonomy, independence, and increasing separation from others. The other progression, followed by women, is characterized by what she calls "an ethic of care...[which] rests on the premise of nonviolence — that no one should be hurt" (p. 174). The endpoint here is one of connectedness with others, and balancing responsibilities to others with responsibilities to self.

For now, I wish simply to point out that Gilligan makes two fundamentally distinct claims. The first is that Kohlberg has inadequately, that is, too narrowly defined the moral domain in terms of largely deontology. As a rival and equally valid view, Gilligan proposes something akin to a virtue-based theory. Second, based on this dispute over moral definitions, Gilligan proposes that males and females undergo different developmental progressions. These two issues of definition and ontogeny are independent because one does not imply or contradict the other. For instance, one could accept a different moral definition from Kohlberg (or Gilligan), and find or not find developmental differences. Conversely, one could accept Kohlberg's (or Gilligan's) definition and find or not find developmental differences.

It is my sense that some researchers have believed that a position on one could logically undermine a position on the other. For instance, in rejecting Walker's (1984, 1986) conclusion that there have been no consistent sex differences on Kohlberg's measures, Baumrind (1986) has argued that women have usually scored lower than males on Kohlberg's measures. Yet it would appear that part of what Baumrind views at stake is that a negative of finding for sex differences on Kohlberg's measures would invalidate the largely virtue-based moral definition which she shares with Gilligan. It is difficult, however, to be sure about my supposition here as an additional confusion stems from Baumrind's charge that Kohlberg's theory reflects a sex bias: an issue that will be taken up later in the section on distinctions between moral variation and moral epistemology.

Distinctions between Moral Definition and Moral Variation

Anthropological accounts of the practices and beliefs of various cultures provides important data that directly inform on the question of whether the moral life is similar or different between cultures. Moreover, at first blush, it may seem self-evident that cultures differ morally. For instance, among the practices van der Post (1958/1986) documents of the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert is that they abandon their elderly either to

attack by animals or to sure starvation. Such a practice differs from the treatment accorded to the elderly in Western cultures. So, too, with the examples described earlier: Unlike devout Hindus, Westerners do not generally believe that it is immoral for a widow to eat fish two to three times a week, or for menstruating women to sleep in the same beds as their husbands. Nor do Western men occasionally engage in the practice of shooting women with barbed arrows, chopping them with machetes or axes, and burning them with firebrands: practices documented among the Yanomamo tribes.

But what is crucial in analyzing such anthropological data is to pay close attention to varying moral definitions. A simple analogy may prove helpful. Modifying an example used by Suzanne Langer (1937/1953), consider four men's suits. One is made of cotton, the second wool, the third polyester, and the fourth silk. Each is also cut to a different size. Now we ask, are these four objects the same? If by object we mean the material, then the answer is no. If by object we mean their size, then the answer is no. But if by object we mean their function as a suit, then the answer is yes. Thus the answer of whether there is variation or similarity between the objects depends on how we define what we mean by object.

So, too, with morality. Depending on how morality is defined, and anthropological data is collected, one is led to varying conclusions about moral diversity. For instance, the above example of the Bushmen practice of leaving their elderly to die appears fundamentally different from our own practices. But as van der Post further describes the Bushmen's intentions, motivations, social context, and environmental constraints, their practice seems less foreign. The Bushmen are a nomadic people that depend on physical movement for their survival. Elderly people are left behind only when they can no longer keep up the nomadic pace and thereby jeopardize the survival of the entire tribe. When the tribe is thus forced to leave an elderly person behind, they conduct parting ceremonies and ritual dances that convey honor and respect. The tribe also builds the elderly a temporary shelter and provides a few token days of food. All these additional practices convey an attitude of care and concern for the elderly, and felt loss at their impeding death — a death that is unavoidable should the tribe as a whole be able to survive.

Such an analysis does not negate differences between Bushmen and Western cultures. On a behavioral level, both cultures do engage in different practices regarding the care of their elderly. But the analysis also points to many grounds of similarities. Both societies show care and concern for their

elderly. Both societies also balance that care with the well being of society as a whole. (Note, for instance, in our society, that as medical practices become more extensive and correspondingly expensive, we increasingly face the problem of how to weigh the benefit to an elderly patient with the monetary cost to society.) If, thus, morality were defined and analyzed in terms of a deontic idea of respect for persons, or a consequentialist idea of promoting the good for the greatest number, then in some respects Bushmen morality may well resemble our own culture's morality.

It is this type of analysis that Turiel, Killen, and Helwig (1987) provide of the anthropological data of Hindu culture collected by Shweder et al. (1987). For instance, it was found that devout Hindus believed that harmful consequences would follow from a widow who ate fish two or three times a week (the act would offend her husband's spirit and cause the widow to suffer greatly). Similarly harmful consequences were believed to follow from a menstruating woman who sleeps in the same bed as her husband (the menstrual blood is believed poisonous and can hurt the husband). While such beliefs, themselves, differ from those in our culture, the underlying concern for the welfare of others is congruent with our own.

Moreover, even when cross-cultural practices and underlying concerns appear incongruent with our own, there may be good reason to suspect that the practices themselves are not fully accepted in that culture. Hatch (1983, p. 92), for instance, points out that while Yanomamo men physically abuse their women, it is not the case that the women enjoy and willingly participate in such practices. Rather, Yanomamo women have been seen to flee in terror when their husbands come at them with a machete. Such behavior would be congruent with a woman in our own culture under attack by her husband, as in say a relationship characterized by wife-battery.

Accepting, then, that an analysis of moral variation depends upon but is analytically separate from moral definition, the following relation can be proposed: Definitions of morality which entail abstract characterizations of justice and welfare tend to highlight moral universals, while definitions which entail specific behaviors or rigid moral rules tend to highlight moral cross-cultural variation. Typically, theorists who strive to uncover moral universals believe they are wrestling with the essence of morality, with its deepest and most meaningful attributes. Thus, for instance, in the Meno, when Menon defines virtue in terms of many different virtues depending on a person's activities, occupation, and age, Socrates asks:

> If I asked you what a bee really is, and you answered that there are many different kinds of bees, what would you answer me if I asked you then: "Do you say there are many different kinds of bees, differing from each other in being bees more or less? Or do they differ in some other respect, for example in size, or beauty, and so forth?" Tell me, how would you answer that question?

And Menon replies:

> I should say that they are not different at all one from another in beehood.

Which exactly is what Socrates wants to say about virtue, and what we could say about the essence of "suits" in the earlier analogy.

In contrast, theorists — and I take Shweder to be of this position — who strive for characterizing moral variation argue that by the time you have a common moral feature that cuts across cultures, you have so disembodied the idea into an abstract form that it loses virtually all meaning and utility. For instance, reconsider the example of devout Hindus who believe that by eating fish two to three times a week, a widow hurts her dead husband's spirit. Is the interesting moral phenomenon that Hindus, like ourselves, are concerned with not causing others harm? Or, as Shweder might argue, is the interesting moral phenomenon that Hindus believe in spirits that can be harmed by earthly activity?

In my own view, I think both questions have merit, and that a middle ground provides a more sensible and powerful approach in research: one that allows for an analysis of universal moral characteristics as well as allowing for the ways in which these characteristics play out in a particular culture at a particular point in time. While this is not the place for an extended discussion of this perspective (see, e.g., Dunker, 1939; Asch, 1952; Hatch, 1983; and Spiro, 1986), two examples of moral-developmental research will be helpful. (For additional examples, see Friedman, 1989; Helwig, 1986; Kahn, 1988; Turiel, Hildebrandt, & Wainryb, in preparation.)

A study by Hollos, Leis, and Turiel (1986) examined social reasoning of Ijo children and adolescents in Nigerian communities. The study reports on various Ijo beliefs that differ from Western beliefs, such as that the spirit of ancestors can be harmed by adultery, or by a menstruating woman touching the food she serves to her husband — not unlike the beliefs of the devout Hindu reported by Shweder et al. Such beliefs, in addition to those against such acts as murder and stealing, are termed in the Ijo language "Ologho" and either

have supernatural sanctions or are considered to be of universal applicability. In contrast, the terms "miyen miyen ya" refer to "customary behaviors that are considered normal by members of the community, such as not eating with the left hand or greeting older people first" (p. 357). Based on interviews with Ijo children and adolescents, it was found they, like children and adolescents in Western countries (Davidson, Turiel, & Black, 1983; Nucci & Nucci, 1982a, 1982b; Smetana, 1981), distinguish between moral and conventional concepts, where the former refer to prescriptions of a noncontingent nature pertaining to obligations in social relations, and the latter to regulations contingent upon the constituted system of social arrangements.

This approach to research — one that is sensitive to both universal and cultural influences — is applicable not only to cross-cultural studies, but studies within our own culture as well. For example, in a study in this country by Friedman (1988), adolescents' conceptions of property rights were found to entail universal abstract components along side of specific variation in the application of those rights. The variation was, in part, found to depend on assumptions about the social context. For example, some students said that copying software to give away did not violate the author's property rights because they assumed that by publishing the program the author implicitly gave consent to have the program copied. Other students said that such copying violated the author's property rights because they assumed explicit consent from the author was required. Friedman proposed that such varied assumptions were related to the cultural conventions which were not well established for new technologically-related property (e.g., computer software).

As our society, from a cultural standpoint, becomes increasingly heterogeneous, this research perspective, applied to education, takes on increasing importance. For the perspective allows educational researchers to ask two overarching questions. First, what types of backgrounds and experiences are different for children from other cultures (e.g., from Hispanic and Asian cultures) that would lead to different types of educational pedagogy and intervention programs? Second, in what ways do children across cultures share similar experiences, emotions, and developmental processes? The second question without the first leads to impoverished instruction because it ignores the individuality of culturally diverse students. In turn, the first question without the second leads to piecemeal and ungeneralizable pedagogy that, moreover, too easily ignores children of any culture that do not happen to be targeted at the time for special consideration.

Distinctions between Moral Variation and Moral Epistemology.

Earlier it was noted that Kohlberg's theory has been charged with being sex-biased. For instance, Baumrind (1986) has argued that had Kohlberg's research shown that higher stages of moral reasoning are equally distributed among sexes then "there could be no charge of sexual...bias against the Kohlberg system" (p. 520). Conversely, on Baumrind's interpretation the findings do show that men score higher than women on Kohlberg's moral reasoning dilemmas, and thus she concludes sex bias exists in the theory. However, an empirical finding for or against sex differences (an issue involving moral variation) cannot, by itself, establish sex bias. This fact is illustrated by the six examples portrayed in Table 1. In the first example, identical to one used by Walker (1986), it is assumed that sex differences are empirically shown to exist for body height (generally men are taller than women). In the second (albeit trivial) example, it is assumed that no sex differences are empirically shown to exist for number of eyes (virtually every man and woman has two eyes). In both cases we can say that no sex bias exists in our system of measurement or counting. This conclusion, however, is not based on an empirically derived negative finding for sex differences, for in the first example it was assumed that sex differences are found. Rather the conclusion is based on a correspondence between the empirical finding with what is taken to be (based on other theoretical considerations or empirical research) the nature of reality.

This same reasoning is applied in Table 1 to four examples that involve Kohlberg's research. If Kohlberg's research showed no sex differences, it could follow that the theory was either sex-biased, should it be that men (or women) were more morally developed (Example 3), or not sex-biased, should it be that men and women are equally moral (Example 4). Similarly, if Kohlberg's research showed sex differences, it could follow that the theory was either sex-biased, should it be that men and women are equally moral (Example 5), or not sex-biased, should it be that men (or women) were more morally developed (Example 6). Thus Baumrind's fallacy should be clear: She assumes there are no sex differences, and charges bias if research finds them, and yet, by her approach, prejudges an answer to precisely the research question. In other words, a confusion occurs when judging findings that bear on moral variation in light of an established normative position on what counts as valid moral knowledge: a confusion between moral variation and moral epistemology.

A more pervasive confusion of variation and epistemology occurs in the anthropological, political, and sociological literature. For instance, in defining cultural relativism, the anthropologist Herskovits (1972) says that

> cultural relativism is a philosophy that recognizes the values set up by every society to guide its own life and that understands their worth to those who live by them, though they may differ from one's own. Instead of underscoring differences from absolute norms that, however objectively arrived at, are nonetheless the product of a given time or place, the relativistic point of view brings into relief the validity of every set of norms for the people who have them, and the values these represent. (p. 31)

In addition, Herskovits writes:

> The very core of cultural relativism is the social discipline that comes of respect for differences — of mutual respect. Emphasis on the worth of many ways of life, not one, is an affirmation of the values in each culture. (p. 33)

Thus Herskovits puts forth the philosophical position that though cross-cultural practices and beliefs can differ from one's own, they deserve our mutual respect and validation. Most notably, for purposes here, is the explicit justification that Herskovits provides for this view:

> For it is difficult to conceive of a systematic theory of cultural relativism — as against a generalized idea of live-and-let-live — without the pre-existence of the massive ethnographic documentation gathered by anthropologists concerning the similarities and differences between cultures the world over. Out of these data came the philosophical position, and with the philosophical position came speculation as to its implications for conduct. (p. 33, emphasis added)

Notice, then, that it is the established empirical claim of cultural variation that leads Herskovits to the epistemic claim that every culture's practices and beliefs are equally valid.

This line of reasoning is shared by some political theorists as well. For example, in "The German Ideology" Marx (1846/1978) argues that the social "class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production..." (p.172). Engels (1846/1978) extends this view into a moral context by asserting that morality

is relative to the economic conditions of each society: "We maintain...that all moral theories have been hitherto the product, in the last analysis, of the economic conditions of society obtaining at the time" (p. 726).

While such relativistic views have had a long history, they have in more recent times been substantively critiqued to the point that Williams (1972) terms such views "vulgar relativism," to denote presumably that they have no legitimate philosophical standing in an otherwise legitimate enterprise of developing sophisticated relativistic positions. One problem with a "vulgar" relativistic view is that it seeks to transcend its own cultural bias, thus either committing itself to what it says cannot be done (establishing an objective judgment), or relegating itself to a relativistic and largely inefficacious statement. The point, though, of rehashing this basic error is to note that the error stems from confusing a fact of moral cross-cultural variation with an epistemological position on the subjectivity of moral knowledge. Given that this confusion and others similar to it continue to appear in the anthropological and sociological literature (e.g., Shweder, 1984, as cited and analyzed by Spiro, 1986; Hogan, 1975, and Sampson, 1977, 1978, 1981, as cited and analyzed by Turiel, 1989), it does well to have it repeated now and again.

Distinctions between Moral Ontogeny and Moral Epistemology.

In the Emile, Rousseau (1762/1979) presents paradigm examples of what has come to be called the naturalistic fallacy. Consider the following propositions: "Do you wish always to be well guided? Then always follow nature's indications" (p. 363). "Everything that hinders and constrains nature is in bad taste" (p. 367). "I am persuaded that all the natural inclinations are good and right in themselves" (p. 370). And, most succinctly stated: "What is, is good..." (p. 371). The fallacy here, whose explication is sometimes credited to Hume (1751/1983) though more often to G. E. Moore (1903/1978), is that facts do not logically imply value. A couple of counter examples make this clear. A baby can be born with an infection: a fact that describes the baby's condition; but that fact does not logically imply that the infection is good, or that a doctor's efforts to hinder the infection is, in Rousseau's terms, in "bad taste". Similarly, a person can naturally acquire AIDS, but it does not logically follow that the disease is good. This fallacy is part of an epistemological enterprise because it attempts, by drawing on empirical evidence, to establish the validity of moral knowledge.

Now and again, this fallacy pervades current arguments. For example, Sperry (1988) claims that inherent in the human cognitive structure is an elaborate system of innate value preferences, and these preferences are directly embodied in future preferences and provide the basis for knowing the rightness of particular moral decisions. Thus Sperry claims that current concepts of cognitive processing make it possible not only to explain mentalistic phenomenon (e.g., moral and religious beliefs), "but to go from fact to value and from perception of what 'is' to what 'should' be" (p. 610). However, Sperry's claim still falls prey to the naturalistic fallacy. For example, as has been argued against Hume, it has been noted that our inherent nature includes not only, as Hume proposes, a general sympathy for all human kind, but some level of aggression as well (cf. Freud's [1920/1967] theory of a death instinct). Assuming that all natural preferences are not moral, it then becomes even clearer that morally right preferences cannot logically be derived from the natural.[1]

At times, Kohlberg, also, comes at least close to committing the naturalistic fallacy as defined above. In one essay, Kohlberg (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972), says that the moral principles underlying Stage 6 of his theory

> represent developmentally advanced or mature stages of reasoning, judgment, and action. Because there are culturally universal stages or sequences of moral development (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971), stimulation of the child's development to the next stage in a natural direction is equivalent to a long-range goal of teaching and ethical principles.

To the extent Kohlberg means to say that because there are universal stages of moral development it therefore follows that the latter stages are more moral than the earlier stages (thus providing long-range pedagogical goals), he commits the fallacy. After all, it could be claimed that as people get older they, by and large, get more politically conservative; but it does not follow from this proposed developmental progression that political conservatism is a more adequate political theory than political liberalism. That is, the claim for the more advanced status of the "higher" stages is not supported by the establishment of a developmental progression.

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[1]Sperry's confusion came to my attention by a working draft of a critique of Sperry (1988) by Pirolli and Goel (1988), School of Education, University of California, Berkeley.

Rather, the claim is supported, as Kohlberg also develops, by other philosophical considerations. For instance, Kohlberg follows a view proposed as early as Baldwin (1899/1973) that a more adequate moral theory will take into account a larger group of people. Based on this philosophical criterion, Kohlberg's stages do increase in moral adequacy: In Stage 1 there is moral consideration only for the self (punishment avoidance). In Stage 2, there is consideration for another person, but only instrumentally (instrumental hedonism). In Stage 3, there is consideration for family members and other personal relations (good boy/good girl orientation). In Stage 4, there is concern for society at large (law and order orientation). And, finally, by Stages 5-6, there is concern for humanity from a global or universal perspective. This stage progression also highlights another philosophical criterion, that of hierarchical integration. Kohlberg proposes that the higher stages subsume the earlier stages. For instance, a Stage 5 or 6 moral consideration includes considerations for self, another, family and society (Stages 1-4, respectively), but moreover embeds these considerations into a universal perspective. It is in this sense that stages represent transformations of moral knowledge rather than simple replacements of one moral view with another.

Now, while these philosophical criteria are arguably plausible criteria in helping evaluate the relative adequacy of various moral theories, their plausibility does not logically follow from the claim that they are found ontogenetically. In fact, Kohlberg himself elsewhere says as much. In Kohlberg's (1971) article provocatively titled, "From is to ought: How to commit the naturalistic fallacy and get away with it in the study of moral development," Kohlberg says there are two forms of the naturalistic fallacy that he is not committing. One of these is "assuming that morality or moral maturity is part of man's biological nature, or that the "biologically older is necessarily the better" (p. 222). This is the fallacy that Sperry commits as described above. Instead, Kohlberg says that "the third form of the 'naturalistic fallacy' which we are committing is that of asserting that any conception of what moral judgment ought to be must rest on an adequate conception of what it is" (p. 222).

At this point Kohlberg moves beyond what most theorists take to be the naturalistic fallacy, and what I had in mind when arguing for the distinction between moral ontogeny and moral epistemology. Moreover, Kohlberg's claim is congruent with some current moral philosophical discourse. For instance, Scheffler (1986a) seeks a moral theory where "the content of morality is

constrained by considerations of the agent's psychology and well-being, and of the ways in which it is appropriate for morality to enter into an agent's life, and to impinge on his or her thought, deliberations, feeling, and action" (p. 537). Elsewhere, Scheffler (1986b) says that the enterprise of moral philosophy "really does suffer from a lack of adequate attention to the detailed reality of human psychological structures and social relations, and from a tendency to rely instead on certain naive and schematic categories of description" (pp. 3-4). This view goes beyond the more simplistic formulation that "ought implies can," and attempts to sketch some substantive relations between moral philosophy and psychology. Roughly similar considerations are also being brought to bear on philosophical thought by Williams (1981, 1985), Nagel (1986), and others, and provide promising avenues for future interdisciplinary moral theorizing and empirical research.

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Table 1: Hypothetical Findings that Help Illustrate Various Relations between Sex Differences and Sex Bias.

Example Number	Area of Research	Measure	"Reality"	Empirical Findings	Sex Differences	Sex Bias
1	Height	English system of measurement	Men are taller than women	Men are taller than women	Yes	No
2	Number of eyes	English system of counting	Men and women have same number of eyes	Men and women have same number of eyes	No	No
3	Moral Reasoning	Kohlberg's Dilemmas	Men more moral than women	Men score the same as women	No	Yes
4	Moral Reasoning	Kohlberg's Dilemmas	Men and women equally moral	Men score the same as women	No	No
5	Moral Reasoning	Kohlberg's Dilemmas	Men and women equally moral	Men score higher than women	Yes	Yes
6	Moral Reasoning	Kohlberg's Dilemmas	Men more moral than women	Men score higher than women	Yes	No